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Message Text

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71
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-15 ISO-00 EB-11 L-03 AGR-20 COME-00

SPC-03 AID-20 NSC-10 RSC-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-15

STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 DRC-01 /158 W
---------- 079060
R 271455Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5646
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 1201

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD EAGR XL UNGA
SUBJECT: REDUCTION IN WEST INDIAN SUGAR QUOTA

REF: A. STATE 187335
B. STATE 189220

1. ALTHOUGH GOTT HAS MADE NO FORMAL APPROACH TO EMBASSY ON SUGAR QUOTA REDUCTION, EDWARD BRAITHWAITE, PERMANENT SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF WEST INDIAN AFFAIRS, RAISED SUBJECT DURING COURTESY CALL BY EMBOFF, SAYING THAT QUOTA REDUCTION WAS "THE MAJOR ISSUE AT THE MOMENT" BETWEEN GOTT AND USG. HE SAID THAT TIMING OF THE USG ACTVQW /9 3 03:8-))6 $-.-&8,& 59 CARIBBEAN NEGOTIATIONS WITH EEC, AND WOULD CERTAINLY STRENGTHEN FRENCH INTRANSIGENCE IN THESE TALKS. BRAITHWAITE UNDERSCORED POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF SUGAR INDUSTRY IN PROVIDING IMPORTANT SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT, ESPECIALLY FOR INDIAN SEGMENT OF POPULATION, AND SAID THAT ANY RETRENCHMENT COULD CAUSE "EXTREMELY EXPLOSIVE" SITUATION. ALTHOUGH
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BRAITHWAITE SEEMED COGNIZANT OF MANDATORY PROVISIONS IN U.S.

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SUGAR ACT, HE SAID HE FIRMLY HOPED THAT USG WOULD AGAIN DECIDE TO "OVERLOOK" SHORTFALL AS IT DID LAST YEAR. THE PERMANENT SECRETARY ALSO DREW ATTENTION TO RECENT WORLD BANK LOAN TO MODERNIZE AND RATIONALIZE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN TRINIDAD, AND COMPLAINED THAT "CAPRICIOUS ACTIONS" SUCH AS SUDDEN QUOTA REDUCTIONS SERIOUSLY HARM GOTT'S PROGRMAS.

2. BRAITHWAITE WAS FULLY FRIEFED ON THIS SUBJECT AND THE GOTT OBVIOUSLY IS VERY CONCERNED. ONCE NEWS OF QUOTA REDUCTIONS BECOMES PUBLIC, THE GOTT MAY WELL REACT VISCERALLY WITH CHARGES THAT WE ARE PUNISHING CARIBBEANS (AS WE DID IN THEIR VIEW ON DOLLAR AREA QUOTA QUESTION) FOR THEIR RECENT FLIRTATION WITH CUBA.

3. IF HE WISHES, PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS WILL HAVE IN THE RULING PNM'S PARTY CONVENTION AN EXCELLENT FORUM OVER NEXT THREE DAYS TO USE QUOTA REDUCTION AS EXAMPLY OF "FOREIGN INTERFERENCE." ALTERNATIVELY, HE MIGHT USE IT TO ILLUSTRATE HIS RECENT THEME THAT THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN IS AT THE MERCY OF THE INTERESTS OF THE BIG POWERS AND MUST ACT TOGETHER TO PROTECT ITSELF. WE ARE CHARY, HOWEVER, IN PREDICTING WILLIAMS' REACTION, FOR HE HAS OVER RECENT YEARS MAINTAINED PRIVATELY AND LATELY PUBLICLY THAT SUGAR IN TRINIDAD IS "DEAD."

4. WHILE I DO NOT THINK THAT LONG TERM EFFECT OF QUOTA REDUCTION ON TRINIDAD SUGAR INDUSTRY WILL NECESSARILY BE AS SERIOUS AS THE GOTT PORTRAYS IT, WE DO FACE A CURRENTLY EMOTIONAL GOTT REACTION AND POTENTIALLY EMOTIONAL PUBLIC REACTION. WE ARE ALSO HAMPERED BY EFFECT ON OUR CREDIBILITY OF "OVERSIGHT" OF SUPPOSEDLY MANDATORY REDUCTION LAST YEAR AND BY BRUISED FEELINGS OVER RECENT DAQ EXPERIENCE. I WOULD HOPE, THEREFORE, THAT AT VERY LEAST WAY IS FOUND TO SUGAR-COAT PILL THAT WILL MINIMIZE INEVITABLE NEGATIVE FALLOUT IN COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN.
MARSHALL

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